

THE SEVEN SAYINGS ON THE CROSS

By James Crumpton

See Him at Calvary! See Him crucified! See Him in the torture and agony of His sufferings! During those seven hours on the cross -- 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. -- He gave the last seven utterances. Seven hours and seven sayings; it was God's number -- the number of perfection. Two is the number of testimony. There were two sevens (seven hours and seven sayings); perfect testimony it was to God's perfect work at Calvary through His Son. He said:

(1) "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," (2) "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." (3) "Woman, behold thy son!...Behold thy mother!" (4) "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (5) "I thirst." (6) "It is finished." (7) "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Let us note some things, briefly, about these sayings:

(1) "FATHER FORGIVE THEM; FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO." We could paraphrase this saying: "Father hold the winds of wrath, postpone the judgment until they know what has happened here." Jesus was asking that judgment be withheld until poor dupes of sin knew what the sinners had done to the Creator and what the Creator had done for sinners. Every sinner saved since that day is an answer to this prayer. Surely, had He not prayed this prayer God would have stricken dead and to Hell every living creature that day!

(2) "VERILY I SAY UNTO THEE, TO DAY SHALT THOU BE WITH ME IN PARADISE." The text is saying: "Amen to you I say -- with me in paradise." Both thieves mocked Him, believed that He was the Son of God, and had all power.

One prayed that He would come down and get him down from the cross and save them from dying. He had no reference to being saved from sin. The other thief changed his mind (repented) and, to paraphrase his request, said, "Lord, stay on the cross, buy a kingdom, and let me be one of the subjects in your kingdom." Jesus' answer, "Amen to you I say -- with me in paradise," was really saying, "So let it be as you have prayed. I take your side, answer your prayer. You will be with me today." It was salvation spontaneously and instantaneously. And in taking that thief's side, He took the side of all of us poor Hell-deserving sinners.

(3) "WOMAN, BEHOLD THY SON!...BEHOLD THY MOTHER!" Mary was not the mother of God. The eternal God has no mother. She was the mother of the human body of Jesus. Here He severs that relationship forever and turns her over to the beloved disciple, John, who was to see to her care. It must have been a heart breaking word to Mary. Tradition says that she fainted. But she found it was far more wonderful to be the daughter of the Christ than the mother of Jesus. Amen and amen!!!! Jesus was saying to John that He wanted him to be the substitute for the Substitute. You see, our Lord was

dying as John's Substitute for sin; He was fulfilling all of the types in the various sacrifices of the Levitical system. So, as He gave Himself as the Substitute for John's sin, He was assigning John to be His substitute here in this life. And He purposed the same for all of us who have been purchased by His Precious Blood. As the poet has said;

"Christ has no hands but our hands
To do His work today,
He has no feet but our feet
To lead men in His way,
He has no tongue but our tongues
To tell men how He died,
He has no help but our help
To bring them to His side."

(4) "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?" This word came at the close of the three hours of darkness (from 12:00 noon till 3:00 P.M.). Oh, it was during this time that the seed of the serpent bruised the heel of the Seed of the woman, and the Seed of the woman bruised the head of the seed of the serpent. Literally, Jesus said: "My God, my God, why hast thou totally abandoned me while I am down under and in the midst of hostile circumstances." His physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual sufferings were beyond the comprehension of our finite, human minds. He suffered all Hell for all sins, for all sinners, the Hell that we would have had to suffer for all eternity in the lake of fire and brimstone. The darkness of those three hours surely speaks of the outer darkness in the charred walls of the damned.

(5) "I THIRST." The One Who had said that those who are thirsty are invited to come unto Him and drink was now thirsty. He thirsted that sinners might have their thirst quenched at the Fountain of the Waters of Life. They tell us that those who died on the cross became so thirsty that their tongues would swell and protrude from their mouths.

(6) "IT IS FINISHED." Here our Lord Jesus used the word, "tetelestai"; it is a word of accomplishment, satisfaction, and victory! It could be translated: "It stands Finished." In exclamation, it might be said:

"Done!", being sure that the idea of perfection is included. The full meaning of the word is: "It was finished and as a result is forever done." Tetelestai was the word the farmer used when there was born into his herd an animal so shapely, beautiful, and healthy that it seemed to be without defects and fault. Tetelestai was the word the sculptor or the painter used when the last finishing touches had been put on the sculptured material or the painting, and it seemed that nothing called for improvement or correction. Tetelestai was the word that the priest used when the devout worshipper brought a lamb without blemish, a male of the first year (according to God's instructions in Exodus 12:5), to be offered as a sacrifice. Tetelestai is the word that takes on its greatest significance when our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, offered Himself as the Lamb of God on the altar of Golgotha and used it to describe His Sacrifice for sins which was complete, stainless, perfect, once for all, eternal, finished, and done forever. Amen and amen!!!!

(7) "FATHER, INTO THY HANDS I COMMEND MY SPIRIT." The Word says that as He uttered these words He bowed His head and gave up the ghost. Doctors and nurses tell us that when people are dying, they try to raise their heads for one more breath. He bowed His head. You see the sufferings did not take His life, ferocious though they were; He laid it down of Himself!

Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

What do we conclude about all this? There is no salvation in the churches, baptism, the Lord's Supper, human merits, human efforts, human gifts, or plans of men. Salvation is in Jesus Christ and in Him alone. We are not saved by any words or sacrifices that we make for God, but by the word and sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary. Salvation is in Him and Him alone. We come to Him in repentence and faith (both of which He gives us) and are saved by grace through faith, plus nothing and minus nothing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us join the hymn writers in saying:

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ, my God;
All the vain things that charm me most -
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See, from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small:
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains:

Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its pow'r,
Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved to sin no more."

Some years ago a Japanese student, who was a Buddhist, enrolled in Columbia University. He decided that while he was in the United States he would go to church and see what comparisons and contrasts exist between Buddhism and Christianity. So, He began attending the Riverside Baptist Church in New York City. At that time, Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick was the pastor. Dr. Fosdick was a liberal theologian. He could preach; yes, he could weave a web around an angel of light. I repeat, he could preach, but he was a liberal theologian! I read a letter that he wrote in which he said that any preacher who believed in the literal, bodily resurrection of Jesus and in the personal return of Jesus to the earth to rule and reign was a backwoods' ignoramus. If that is the case, I plead guilty to being a backwoods' ignoramus.

The Japanese Buddhist went to hear Dr. Fosdick every Sunday for nine months, as he sought to compare and contrast Buddhism and Christianity.

He planned to return to Columbia University for summer school, but he had a change of plans and went to the University of Toronto instead. In those days, Dr. T.T. Shields was pastor in Toronto, Canada. While there he went to hear Dr. Shields with the same purpose with which he had gone to hear Dr. Fosdick in New York. Dr. Shields was a conservative Bible believer. He preached the Bible in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Buddhist went to hear Dr. Shields Sunday morning, Sunday night, and, then again, on Wednesday night. He saw a great difference in the preaching than that which he had heard in New York.

At the close of the service on Wednesday night, he asked an usher what he would have to do to get an appointment with Dr. Shields. The usher told him that he would not have to do anything, and then simply escorted him to Dr. Shield's study.

The Japanese student told this great preacher what had happened in New York and there in Toronto as he had attended church. He said, "There is little difference, in principle, in the preaching of Dr. Fosdick and the teaching of my Buddhist priest in Japan. Dr. Fosdick, in preaching Christianity, says that if you do-do-do certain things and don't-don't-don't do certain other things, all will be well when you die. My priest in Japan also tells us to do-do-do certain things and don't-don't-don't do certain other things and all will be well when we die. It is true that the things they tell me to do and not to do are different, but, in principle, they are both saying, "do, do, do, and don't, don't, don't."

Then, as he continued, he said, "But, Dr. Shields, you preach that Christianity is something Jesus Christ has already done on the cross to make possible the forgiveness of all our sins." Dr. Shields assured the young man that he had heard correctly. He emphasized again how that we are all Hell-deserving sinners, how Jesus died, was buried, and arose again, and in so doing, He did all the work and made the only sacrifice which could ever forgive and save us from our sins. There, the Buddhist student knelt, wept, repented, and received our Lord Jesus Christ by faith as personal Saviour. Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

During his ministry, Dwight L. Moody, the great evangelist, left Chicago by train for a city-wide campaign on the west coast. The engineer on that train was a Mormon. When he heard that the famous Mr. Moody would be one of his passengers, he asked the conductor to request Mr. Moody to ride in the cab with him, saying that he would like to talk to this famous preacher.

When the conductor relayed the engineer's request to Mr. Moody, he gladly consented. All the way to Salt Lake City that engineer tried to make a Mormon out of Mr. Moody. However, he did not have any success.

As they neared Salt Lake City, the engineer said, "In Salt Lake City another engineer will take over and carry the train on to the west coast; so, I will have to leave you soon. But I do believe that you would make a wonderful Mormon preacher and I would like very much to see you become one." Mr. Moody replied by saying, "Sir, I could never become a Mormon preacher. However, there is not much difference in your religion and mine, just two letters." The puzzled engineer said, "I do not understand. What do you mean?" Mr. Moody then said, "Well, you spell your religion D-O, Do. You teach that if you do-do-do and perchance do enough, when you die, you may go to Heaven. My religion is spelled D-O-N-E, Done. It is not something we do; it was all done at Calvary through the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. He has done all that was necessary for my sins to be forgiven through His death, burial, and resurrection. So, I am going to Heaven on the merits of the finished work of Jesus Christ." Amen and amen!!!!

Jesus is the Saviour; yes, He is the only Saviour. Salvation is not an experience. Salvation is a Person. Sure, we have an experience with Him when we are saved, but the experience is not our salvation. The Lord Jesus Christ in Person is our salvation. He is God, and He is the only Saviour.

Jesus is "the sweetest Name on mortal tongue; the sweetest carol ever sung, Jesus, Blessed Jesus."

And, finally, let me emphasize that

JESUS IS LORD

Yes, Jesus purposes to be Lord in the lives of those whom He saves. Many trust Him for salvation but refuse to yield to His Lordship. One of the secrets as to why there are so many unhappy Christians is that they have received Christ as Saviour but not as Lord of their lives. Paul could say, "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ...." This word "servants" is our word bondslaves. They had not simply been saved, but had yielded and permitted Jesus to become Lord of their lives.

There is a heresy abroad today which teaches that Jesus saves sinners and implies that if they want to make Him Lord it will be fine, or if they prefer to go on in their carnal ways that that will be fine, too. The Bible knows nothing of such teaching. Jesus purposes to make real disciples out of all whom He saves and to be Lord of their lives.

Would it not be wonderful if all saved folk wanted to grow up, and go on making Jesus Lord of their lives with the same enthusiasm that boys and girls want to grow up? A little boy and girl have their sixth birthday, and even before the birthday cake is cut, should you ask them about their ages, the reply would be: "I am six going on seven." And those words, going on seven, would come out with emphasis. Oh, for Christians who will go on for Him making Him Lord of their lives. How about you?

Let me shoot a quiver full of interrogatory arrows into your heart. Has Jesus the supreme place in your desires? Do you esteem all things but loss in comparison with the excellency of Jesus Christ, your Lord? Is He to you as a city of refuge to the manslayer? Is He to you as a spring of water in a dry place? Is He to you as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land? Is He to you, having had experience with Him, a refuge and fortress, a very present help in time of trouble? Is everything in Jesus desirable in your eyes? Do you desire to obey His commandments? Do you desire to have His spirit? Are His holiness and government, His cross and sufferings desirable to you? Are you longing at all times for Him? Have your eyes been opened to see His "want and worth?" Is His righteousness the righteousness you desire? Do you want to do His will -- no matter what it may be? Are you willing for Him to dictate wholly your plans, actions, and speech? Is He really your Lord?

Is He Lord of your body? Is He Lord of your mind? Is He Lord of your influence? Is He Lord of your abilities? Is He Lord of your talents? Is He Lord of your job? Is He Lord of your pocketbook? Is He Lord of all your activities? Is He Lord of your home? Is He Lord of your recreation? Is He Lord of your dating? Is He Lord your love, courtship, and marriage? Is He Lord of your dress? Is He Lord of your grooming? Oh, beloved, is He Lord in every area of your life? He purposes to be Lord in the lives of all those whom He saves!

I would that He were Lord in our lives to the extent that we could all say with the poet:

Had I a thousand lives to live
I'd live them all for Thee,
Who once for me Thy life didst give,
O Lamb of Calvary!
Bought with Thy Holy Precious Blood,
I am no longer mine.
Then take my life, Blest Son of God
As Thine and only Thine.

Had I a thousand tasks to do,
I'd do them all for thee,
If strength these labors to pursue
Were given unto me.
It matters not if these my hands
Hold scepter, spade, or pen

Lord Jesus to Thy blest commands
I owe a glad 'Amen.'

Had I a thousand griefs to bear,
I'd bear them all for Thee,
Rememb'ring well Thy anguished prayer
In dark Gethsemane.
Thy grace makes sweet the Mara cup
Each burden, pain, and loss
Grows light when I in faith look up
To Thy victorious Cross.

Had I a thousand songs to sing,
I'd sing them all for Thee -
Redeemer, Saviour, Shepherd, King -
To laud Thy majesty.
Though psalms of earth cannot compare
With anthems angels raise,
Still would my tongue Thy praise declare
In love divinest lays.

Had I a thousand gifts to bring,
I'd bring them all to Thee
Each one a love filled offering
For all Thy love to me,
While from the altar of my heart
Prayers' incense would ascend,
And fragrance to each gift impart,
For Thee my dearest Friend.

Had I a thousand deaths to die,
I'd die them all for Thee,
If, dying, I could glorify
The love that bled for me
Thy hand my feeble bark will take
O'er Jordan's rolling tide.
When in Thy likeness I awake
I shall be satisfied.

Had I a thousand crowns to cast,
Blest Saviour at Thy feet,
When I have reached my home at last,
My bliss would be complete!
Until I reach that shore divine,
O My Belov'd a smile of Thine
Is heav'n enough for me.

Oh, for this kind of consecration to our Lord Jesus! May we come with the humility of John the Baptist who could say that he was not worthy to loose or to unloose His shoes and that He must increase while he must decrease.

Let us yield, surrender, and dedicate our all to do His bidding, letting Him be Lord in every area of our lives.

And, sinner friend, would you behold Him! He is the Water, the Milk, the Bread, the Meat, the Honey, the Feast that your poor, dying, hungry, thirsty soul needs. The banquet is spread. Come, sinner, come!!!! Taste and see that the Lord is good!

In Him is the fullness of righteousness. In Him is the fullness of holiness. In Him is the fullness of faithfulness. In Him is the fullness of Deity. In Him is the fullness of wrath. In Him is the fullness of justice.

In Him is the fullness of power to put you in the lake of fire where you deserve to spend eternity. But praise God, there is also in Him the fullness of the love, the grace, the mercy, the pardon, the justification, the peace, the everlasting life which are all freely offered to you because of Calvary, because of the price He paid, because of His death, burial, and resurrection. Yes, in Him is the forgiveness of all of your sins. He invites you to come. He offers you life abundantly and eternally. He does not want you to perish, to go to Hell.

The best of saints compared to Jesus are but as dewdrops scattered on the Head of the Bridegroom, lost in the glory of His hair! In the language of the Song of Solomon: "His mouth is most sweet; yea he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved and this is my friend...."

Come, sinner, come! Taste and see! He will be your Friend, your Beloved!

Repent as a sinner, and receive Him by simple faith! He will save you! Oh, let Him save you know! Jesus is God! Jesus is the only Saviour! Jesus is Lord!